

Sexual Violence Awareness Week to Focus on Child Sexual Abuse FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southeast Saskatchewan – This year, Sexual Violence Awareness Week is May 17-21 as proclaimed by the Government of Saskatchewan. Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan (SASS) is taking the lead for this weeklong campaign and Envision Counselling and Support Centre is eager to take part.

This year's theme is "*Champions for Children*" and focusses on creating a culture of belief around child sexual abuse in Saskatchewan. The primary audience for this campaign is community caregivers. Community caregivers are individuals that are a part of the extended community that care for a child outside of the home including neighbours, family, friends, babysitters, day-care workers, teachers or coaches.

"These are the people that cultivate close relationships with children in the community and this week is designed to support them," says Christa Daku, Executive Director at Envision Counselling and Support Centre. "We want to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse, learn how to create safe spaces for children and know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse."

Understandably, this topic can leave many feeling helpless and devastated when faced with the harsh realities that children experience. According to the Government of Canada, 1 in 2 girls and 1 in 6 boys will experience some form of sexual abuse, assault or exploitation before the age of 21.

Daku says that only through collective efforts can we approach the magnitude and complexity of sexual violence and find a way towards a future where it can be prevented before it happens.

"Child sexual abuse has varying degrees of impact on people's lives," Daku says. "We want to honour those who are directly affected and those who provide support for survivors of child sexual abuse as well as recognize the importance of bringing education and awareness to this issue."

This campaign aims to shift cultural attitudes and beliefs, dissolve myths and misconceptions and help with understanding a community member's duty to report child sexual abuse.

Learn more on these topics and join the conversation with Envision Counselling on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @EnvisionCSC and SASS on Facebook @sass.sask and Instagram @sexualassaultservices.sask.

SASS is a provincial non-profit organization that works collectively with front-line agencies, community partners, and governments that provide support and advocacy for those affected by sexual violence in Saskatchewan.



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Envision Counselling and Support Centre has been supporting Southeast Saskatchewan for over 25 years by providing innovative programming and diverse counselling and support services to individuals, couples and families. Individuals looking for more information can find it on Envision's website at www.envisioncounsellingcentre.com.

What should I watch for in children?

Behavioural

- Increased anger and aggression related behaviour
- Clinging
- Self-harm and suicide attempts
- Withdrawing
- Eating problems
- Avoiding being home
- Running away
- Sexual behaviour that is inappropriate for the child's age and developmental status
- Knowledge about sex and sexuality that is unexpected for the child's developmental level
- Negative peer involvement
- Irregular school attendance
- Conduct problems
- Delays in development at school or have an unexplained decrease in grades and overall school performance
- Constantly reporting feeling unwell with no apparent medical explanation

Taking action:
Watch for concerning signs in children

Psychological

- Anxiety
- Depression and irritability
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings of hopelessness
- Physical pain that cannot be explained medically
- Disconnecting from their surroundings, "zoning out," or going somewhere else

Emotional

- Shame
- Fear
- Confusion
- Self-blame
- Guilt

Physical

- Unexplained bruises, cuts, or scrapes
- Vaginal or anal injuries
- Urinary tract infection
- Yeast infections
- Sexually transmitted infection
- Pregnancy

little warriors

Learn more at littlewarriors.ca

**Little Warriors is a national charitable organization focused on the awareness, prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse.*

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For more information, or interview requests, please contact:

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